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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/832,214	04/11/2001	Earl J. Votolato	SPELL-003B	9944

7590

11/08/2002

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EXAMINER

DRUAN, THOMAS J

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3724

DATE MAILED: 11/08/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/832,214

Applicant(s)

VOTOLATO, EARL J.

Examiner

Thomas J. Druan, Jr.

Art Unit

3724

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 11 April 2001 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____.
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) ____ 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they do not include the following reference sign(s) mentioned in the description: 34, a "distal end" as described in paragraph 0016. A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

3. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention.

It is unclear from the drawings or specification how a tension spring would be used in the shown configuration. It is thought that perhaps a torsion spring would be appropriate given the rotation of the cap structure, as opposed to a tension spring in which a force is applied generally collinear with the central axis of the spring. Clarification, via a drawing and/or further description, as to how a tension spring is employed in the invention is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 1-3, 5 & 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by US 4,980,977 to Matin et al. (hereinafter Matin).

Matin discloses the invention as claimed including a handle 2; a blade 7; a transparent (column 4, lines 40-41) blade cover/cap structure 8 with biasing member 10; and a blade-cover locking system comprising a cover lock member with a first engagement element, notch 21 (in Fig. 2A) in a wall of the blade cover, and hand-operable cover-release member 16/17/22 with a second engagement member, a distal end of outwardly biased arm structure 22, whereby engagement of said elements with each other maintains the blade cover in a locked mode (column 2, lines 2-6). Said cap member has a floor formed by flanges 23, with a slot between said flanges from where the blade 7 is exposed during a cutting operation (Fig. 5A).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 4 & 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Matin.

Matin discloses the invention as claimed, including a cap structure that is arcuately movable and a cap structure that is arcuately shaped at a rear end thereof (see Fig. 2A).

Alternatively, if it was intended that the entire cap structure be arcuately shaped, then Matin discloses the invention substantially as claimed, including a cap structure that is arcuately movable, but lacks a cap structure that is arcuately shaped. It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to make the cap structure of Matin arcuately shaped so as to better conform to the shape of a blade which is arcuately shaped (column 3, lines 14-19) since it has been held that a change in form or shape is generally recognized as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art.

8. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matin.

Matin discloses the invention substantially as claimed, but uses a torsion spring instead of a tension spring to act as the blade-cover biasing structure. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use a tension spring for the purpose of biasing the cap structure to cover the blade because the examiner takes Official Notice of the equivalence of tension springs and torsion springs for their use in the biasing art and the selection of any of these known equivalents to transmit a biasing force to the cap structure would be within the level of ordinary skill in the art.

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Conclusion

9. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Warner, Walters, Bailey, Jones, DuBuque, Chomiak, van der Westhuizen et al., Landis et al., and Marshall et al. are cited to further show the state of the art.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thomas J. Druan, Jr. whose telephone number is 703-308-4200. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (8:30-6:00) First Friday Off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Allan N. Shoap can be reached on 703-308-1082. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9302 for regular communications and 703-872-9303 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-1148.

agof
tjd

October 30, 2002

Boyer Ashley
BOYER D. ASHLEY
PRIMARY EXAMINER